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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 CPR-02 A-01 M-02 DRC-01 /108 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6837

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 12492

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP (PRESIDENT LEONE) IT
SUBJECT: LEONE VISIT

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE (GUIDI) HAS INFORMED US OF A FURTHER DELAY IN REACHING COORDINATED GOI POSITION ON THE SUBJECTS TO BE RAISED BY THE ITALIANS SIDE DURING THE LEONE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. GUIDI NOW EXPECTS TO BRIEF EMBASSY ON FOREIGN MINISTRY'S PROPOSED SUBJECTS ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13. MEANWHILE, ONLY INFORMATION GUIDI COULD PASS ON IS THAT PAPERS PROPOSED FOR FOREIGN MINISTER'S APPROVAL INCLUDE EAST-WEST RELATIONS, THE MEDITERRANEAN, NATO, US-EC RELATIONS, AND CSCE.

2. MEANWHILE CONVERSATION WITH QUIRINALE PRESS CHIEF VALENTINO ON SEPTEMBER 10 PRODUCED THE INFORMATION THAT FOREIGN MINISTER MORO FAVORS ONLY A LIMITED INCLUSION OF SPECIFICS IN CONVERSATIONS, WITH THE EMPHASIS ON REAFFIRMATION OF US-ITALIAN FRIENDSHIP AND MUTUAL CONFIDENCE. MORO'S ALLEGED POSITION WOULD BE CONSONANT WITH LEONE'S CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE AS CHIEF OF STATE AND NOT REPEAT NOT CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, WE ARE INFORMED THAT LEONE WOULD PREFER A MORE OPEN AND WIDE-RANGING FRAMEWORK FOR THE TALKS, MORE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR ASSUMPTION THAT "MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST" WOULD BE COVERED.

3. VALENTINO LEANS TOWARD THE MORO VIEW FAVORING LIMITED CONSIDERATION OF SPECIFICS. MATTERS SUCH AS THE ITALIAN AND
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INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, AS WELL AS PROBLEMS OF NATO

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RESULTING ESPECIALLY FROM THE CYPRUS CRISIS CAN BEST BE HANDLED IN OTHER WAYS, IN VALENTINO'S VIEW.

4. ON ECONOMIC SIDE VALENTINO REVIEWED MAJOR ELEMENTS OF CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS, AGREEING WITH THE MORE SERIOUS OF CURRENT PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENTS WHICH NOTE THE SUBSTANTIAL STRENGTHS AS WELL AS WEAKNESSES INHERENT IN THE ITALIAN AND WORLD SITUATIONS. THE ITALIAN SITUATION, IN VALENTINO'S VIEW, DOES NOT WARRANT THE ALARMIST ACCOUNTS WHICH ARE MORE POPULAR IN THE PRESS AND WHICH HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY ASSESSMENTS SUCH AS PSI LABOR MINISTER BERTOLDI'S, PREDICTING ONE MILLION ITALIAN UNEMPLOYED. VALENTIONO RETURNED SEVERAL TIMES, AND OBVIOUSLY REGRETTED, THE CLASSIFICATION OF ITALY AS A QUESTIONABLE CREDIT RISK BY THE COMPTROLLER OF THE CURRENCY, AS REPORTED BY THE PRESS.

5. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, VALENTINO TENDED TO MINIMIZE THE PROBLEM RAISED BY THE SOCIALISTS IN THE PUBLIC AIRING OF THEIR CONCERN REGARDING ITALY'S PARTICIPATION IN NATO, AND HE ASSERTED FIRMLY THAT AS LONG AS GIOVANNI LEONE REMAINED IN OFFICE THERE WOULD BE NO ACCEPTANCE OF EXTREME RIGHT OR EXTREME LEFT IN THE GOVERNMENT. VALENTINO SAID THAT, GIVEN THE MORAL AND PSYCOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF ITALY'S ALLIES, AND PARTICULARLY A SUCCESSFUL VISIT EMPHASIZING THE MUTUAL FREINDSHIP AND CONFIDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES AND ITALY, STABILITY CAN BE MAINTAINED AND THE CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS COULD BE REASONABLY IN HAND BY FEBRUARY OR MARCH 1975. THIS IN TURN WOULD PERMIT A GOOD CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PERFORMANCE IN THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS DUE IN JUNE 1975, OR AT LEAST WOULD INSURE THAT ANY SHIFTS IN DC ELECTORAL SUPPORT WOULD NOT BE DRAMITIC. ONCE THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD, ACCORDING TO VALENTINO, OTHER PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE REAFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT IN ITALY FOR NATO COULD BE MANAGED EASILY. FOR THE MOMENT MUTUAL FRIENDSHIP AND CONFIDENCE ARE THE GOALS TO BE STRESSED IN THE FORTHCOMING VISIT.

6. COMMENT: WE POINTED OUT TO VALENTINO THAT ITALY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES AND WE DO NOT THINK THIS FACT NEED BE IN DOUBT. HOWEVER, IMPORTANT PROBLEMS OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY INCLUDING THOSE REGARDING THE ALLIANCE CANNOT BE PUT INTO COLD STORAGE UNTIL AFTER THE CONFIDENTIAL

REGIONAL ELECTIONS OF 1975. THE INEXORABLE PACE OF EVENTS DOES NOT PERMIT US TO POSTPONE CONSIDERATIONS OF IMPORTANCE TO THE ALLIANCE IN GENERAL AND TO THE UNITED STATES AND ITALY IN PARTICULAR. WHILE ACCEPTING VALENTINO'S ASSESSMENT OF THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED, WE NOTED NEVERTHELESS THAT THE PROBLEM IS HOW TO CONDITION ITALIAN PUBLIC OPINION TO THE NEED TO CONSIDER THE BROAD RANGE OF ITALY'S PROBLEMS -- INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL --SIMULTANEOUSLY, INCLUDING PARTICULARLY THE BASIC

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IMPORTANCE TO ITALY OF A HEALTHY, VIGOROUS AND UP-TO-DATE ALLIANCE.
WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THE ITALIAN DELEGATION SHOULD BE
GIVEN OUR FULL AND SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING, AND ENCOURAGED TO
FEEL THAT THEY HAVE NOT ONLY OUR SUPPORT BUT OUR CONFIDENCE.
AT THE SAME TIME, THE THRUST OF OUR CONVERSATIONS SHOULD FOCUS
SHARPLY UPON THE PROBLEMS WHICH MUST BE FACED AND SOLVED,
INCLUDING NOT ONLY ITALY'S ECONOMIC AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS,
BUT ALSO THOSE OF BROADER SIGNIFICANCE, INCLUDING PARTICULARLY THE
QUESTION OF ITALIAN PERFORMANCE IN NATO, THE BASIC AND IRREPLACEABLE
VALUE OF NATO TO ITALY (E.G., THE PROBLEMS OF POST-TITO YUGOSLAVIA).
AND THE QUESTION OF ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN ANY FORM
IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. VOLPE

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